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Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
TRSE-00 EB-08 /063 W
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R 040800Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5884

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 3038

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJECT: CGP MISSION TO US

SUMMARY. CHARGE WAS INFORMED FEBRUARY 24 THAT CGP (KOMEITO) WAS PLANNING TO DISPATCH PARTY MISSION TO US, LED BY SECGEN YANO, DURING WEEK OF APRIL 4. MISSION WISHES TO MEET WITH SECRETARY, NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR AND SECRETARY TREASURY. IN ERA IN WHICH "SWING VOTE" OF JAPAN'S MODERATE PARTIES IS LIKELY TO PLAY INCREASINGLY VALUABLE ROLE TO LDP IN DIET AND WHEN CGP, ITSELF, IS LOOKING FOR NEW IDEAS AND NEW POLICY RATIONALE, MISSION AFFORDS GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO EXPOSE LEADERSHIP TO AUTHORITATIVE, HIGH-LEVEL US THINKING THAT COULD HELP NUDGE PARTY IN DIRECTIONS FAVORABLE TO US. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT DEPARTMENT EXTEND APPROPRIATE COOPERATION AND SEEK TO SECURE REQUESTED APPOINTMENTS. END SUMMARY.

1. CGP (KOMEITO) SECGEN YANO AND FOREIGN POLICY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN WATANABE INFORMED CHARGE FEBRUARY 24 THAT CGP PLANNED TO DISPATCH OFFICIAL PARTY MISSION TO US, TENTATIVELY DURING WEEK OF APRIL 4. MISSION WOULD BE LED BY YANO AS CHAIRMAN TAKEIRI'S PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE, AND INCLUDE WATANABE AND THREE OTHER "FUTURE LEADERS" OF CGP. WATANABE SAID THAT MISSION WOULD LIKE TO CALL ON SECRETARY, NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR, AND TREASURY SECRETARY AND HOPED TO ARRANGE MEETINGS WITH CONGRES-
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SIONAL LEADERS, A ROUNDTABLE WITH MAJOR AMERICAN JOURNALISTS, AND TO HAVE A LUNCHEON MEETING WITH JAPAN SOCIETY IN NEW YORK. THEY WERE ALREADY WORKING THROUGH FONOFF, AND JAPANESE EMBASSY WAS AWARE OF THEIR GENERAL PLANS.

2. THIS WILL BE YANO'S FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO US AND FIRST EXTENSIVE CONTACT WITH SENIOR USG OFFICIALS. HE HOPES TO

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ESTABLISH PERSONAL CONTACTS, GAIN SOME IMPRESSION ABOUT FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF US FOREIGN POLICY, AND CREATE BROADER AND MORE ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF CGP AMONG AMERICANS. HE IS INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING KOREA, INTERNATIONAL TRADE, BALANCE OF PAYMENTS, AND NUCLEAR-FUEL SUPPLY. HE SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT, WHILE PARTY WAS INTERESTED IN KCIA AND LOCKHEED SCANDALS, HE DID NOT INTEND TO TAKE UP THESE PROBLEMS IN WASHINGTON, AND WATANABE TOLD US THAT MISSION DID NOT PLAN TO HAVE RUNNING SERIES OF PRESS CONFERENCES WHILE IN US.

3. YANO HAS BEEN REPORTED TO HAVE HARBORED ANTI-AMERICAN BIAS IN PAST, BUT SOURCES CLOSE TO HIM HAVE TOLD US THAT THIS IS DECIDEDLY NOT CASE AND THAT, IF ANYTHING, HE TENDS TO BE ON CONSERVATIVE SIDE OF CGP. HE IS STRONG CANDIDATE TO SUCCEED CHAIRMAN TAKEIRI, AND IS SAID TO BE CLOSE TO DAISAKU IKEDA, PRESIDENT OF CGP'S PRINCIPAL SUPPORT ORGANIZATION, SOKA GAKKAI, AND WHO IS BELIEVED TO HAVE HAND IN PROMOTING YANO MISSION. WATANABE IS COUNTING HEAVILY ON MISSION TO HELP EDUCATE YANO ON IMPORTANCE OF US-JAPAN RELATIONS AND ENHANCE HIS UNDERSTANDING OF MUTUAL PROBLEMS.

4. IN ERA OF CHANGING POLITICAL BALANCE IN JAPAN, CAREFUL CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO HANDLING OF THIS DELEGATION. FOR MOST OF PAST THIRTY YEARS, RULING LDP HAS ENJOYED VIRTUALLY UNCHALLENGEABLE MAJORITIES IN BOTH HOUSES OF DIET. AS RESULT OF 1974 UPPER HOUSE AND DECEMBER 1976 LOWER HOUSE ELECTIONS, HOWEVER, THESE MAJORITIES HAVE BEEN SHARPLY REDUCED, CREATING SITUATION OF ROUGHLY EQUAL DIET BALANCE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION PARTIES. BALANCE IN DIET COULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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FURTHER TILTED IN FAVOR OF OPPOSITION IF, AS MANY SUGGEST NOW, LDP SHOULD LOSE UPPER HOUSE MAJORITY IN JULY ELECTION. FOR FIRST TIME IN POSTWAR HISTORY, COOPERATION OF ONE OR MORE OPPOSITION PARTIES HAS BECOME ESSENTIAL TO CONSERVATIVES FOR SMOOTH STEERING OF DIET, INCLUDING PASSAGE OF BILLS IMPOTANT TO US. WITH 56 SEATS IN LOWER HOUSE, CGP ALREADY WIELDS WHAT AMOUNTS TO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TOKYO 3038

"SWING VOTE" IN DIET, AND ITS IMPORTANCE AS LARGEST CENTRIST PARTY WILL MOST CERTAINLY INCREASE. IF LDP SHOULD SUSTAIN FURTHER LOSSES AT POLLS, CGP WOULD BE ONE OF THREE LOGICAL CANDIDATES FOR PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE COALITION WITH CONSERVATIVES.

5. CGP SUPPORT COMES LARGELY FROM FUNDAMENTALLY CONSERVATIVE, ANTI-COMMUNIST LOWER MIDDLE CLASS SECTOR OF JAPANESE SOCIETY. IN CONTEXT OF OPPOSITION COOPERATION, IT HAS SEVERED RELATIONSHIPS WITH COMMUNISTS AND IS PRESENTLY AT ODDS WITH JSP. CONSCIOUS OF ITS NEW IMPORTANCE, CGP, WHICH ALREADY SHARES GOOD DEAL OF COMMON GROUND WITH LDP, ESPECIALLY IN EMPHASIS IT PLACES ON US-JAPAN RELATIONS, HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO MANUEVER TOWARD MORE "REALISTIC" POSTURE CONSONANT WITH ITS JUDGMENT THAT JAPANESE VOTERS HAVE REJECTED LEFT AND RIGHT EXTREMES IN FAVOR OF MIDDLE-OF-ROAD ALTERNATIVES. WASHINGTON VISIT OFFERS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPOSE LEADERSHIP TO AUTHORITATIVE, HIGH-LEVEL US THINKING THAT COULD HELP NUDGE PARTY IN DIRECTIONS FAVORABLE TO US INTERESTS. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT, PERHAPS IN RECOGNITION OF PARTY'S NEW-FOUND IMPORTANCE, JANUARY CGP DELEGATION TO PRC WAS RECEIVED BY CHAIRMAN HUA, THE FIRST JAPANESE PARTY DELEGATION TO HAVE RECEIVED SUCH TREATMENT.

6. EMBASSY BELIEVES US INTERESTS WOULD BE WELL SERVED BY SUCCESSFUL CGP MISSION, AND RECOMMENDS THAT DEPARTMENT SEEK TO SECURE APPOINTMENTS AS REQUESTED WITH SECRETARY, NATIONAL
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SECURITY ADVISOR AND SECRETARY TREASURY.
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